National Maternity Benefit Scheme

2829. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court in January, 2007 pulled up the Centre and States for tardy implementation of the 100 per cent Centrally sponsored National Maternity Benefit Scheme to Below Poverty Line families;

(b) if so, whether State Governments implemented the scheme to a bare minimum level and left with huge unutilized funds despite receiving dwindling outlays every successive year from the Centre;

(c) whether Government have failed to monitor the scheme effectively;

(d) the total number of families benefited up till now; and

(e) the steps the Central and State Governments have taken to implement the scheme and utilized the funds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) The Hon'ble Supreme Court while hearing the writ petition (Civil) regarding PUCL Versus Union of India and other, expressed concern over the low utilisation of funds by the States under National Maternity Benefits Scheme(NMBS).

(b) and (c) Due to poor implementation of the scheme by the States/ Union Territories(UT), many States could not utilise the allocated fund, As a result, the States could not furnish utilisation certificates in time. Although, Central Government had sufficient money, the same could not be released to these States. The matter regarding low utilisation of fund has been discussed with States in several meetings and follow-up communications. With regards to the pending utilisation certificates, it is being vigorously followed up. As the core responsibility of implementation of National Maternity Benefit Scheme was with the States/UTs, they were advised to closely monitor the implementation.

(d) During its operation from 1995-96 to 2004-05, approximately 1.20 crores pregnant women have benefited under the scheme.

(e) Due to low utilisation of fund and also due to the fact that the scheme was not addressing the maternal health issues holistically, the scheme has been modified into a new scheme namely Janani Suraksha Yojana providing cash benefits alongwith maternity services. The new scheme has been introduced with effect from April, 2005. In the States having low level of health indicators, impeding parameters like BPL certification, party and age have been removed. Besides, the quantum of cash benefits has been increased to Rs. 1400/- per delivery in rural areas. For quick disbursement of cash benefit, money is disbursed through ANM & ASHA. In addition, Gram Panchayat is also invovled in the disbursement of cash. The Central Government has funded the State to set up progamme management units at the State, district and even at block level, under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)

Since the introduction of Janani Surakha Yojana (JSY), majority of the States have been reporting higher expenditure. Against approximately 5.7 lakhs beneficiaries reported in the financial year 2005-06, around 21 lakh pregnant women have benefited from this scheme till February, 2007, in the year 2006-07. An amount of Rs, 261.00 crores has been released to States/UTs in the year 2006-07 for Janani Suraksha Yojana.

Maternal Mortality Ratio in the country

2830. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to UNICEF, India has high maternal mortality ratio at 301 per 1,00,000 live births;

(b) whether it is a fact that the UNICEF has launched a new scheme to conduct probe into maternal deaths; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) UNICEF has not conducted any survey to ascertain Maternal Mortality Ratio in India and uses official published data for reference. Based on the official estimates of Registrar General of India (RGI) (SRS 2001-03), the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) for India is 301 per 1,00,000 live births.